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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA POLITICAL NEWSLETTER AUGUST 30-SEPTEMBER 5

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¶1. (SBU) This was written in partnership with the Open Source Center's Pretoria Bureau. The newsletter is open to contributions from officers in the Embassy or in the Consulates who wish to highlight political trends. Contact Madeline Seidenstricker or Jonathan Smallridge for more information, or to make contributions. The newsletter also is available on the Political Section's blog, "A View from South Africa," found on intelink.gov.

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International News  
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Zuma Urges Support for Obama's Efforts in Middle East

¶2. (U) Addressing the South African Jewish Board of Deputies on August 29, President Zuma said that the only viable solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was one that fulfills the aspirations of both parties for independent homelands through two states for the two peoples, adding that President Obama's efforts in pursuit of a two-state solution "should be supported". Zuma said Pretoria supports the United Nations position on the issue and condemns "all forms of violence from whatever quarter, particularly where civilians are targeted". Zuma also told the audience that although South Africa was made up of diverse communities, individual identities must not be above our national identity. (The Presidency, September 4)

DICO on IBSA Ministerial

¶3. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation recapped the visit of DICO Minister Nkoana-Mashabane to Brazil for a trilateral ministerial meeting hosted by her counterpart Celso Amorim and attended by India's External Relations minister S. M. Krishna. The three ministers reportedly reaffirmed their countries' commitment to further strengthening the role of IBSA and dealing with United Nations Reform, the international financial and economic crisis, the increase of international trade, and condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The next IBSA summit is scheduled for October 8 in Brazil.

Zuma's Trip to Zimbabwe

¶4. (U) President Zuma ended his two-day working visit to Zimbabwe after opening the 99th Harare Agricultural Show. Zuma visited Zimbabwe in the capacity as South African President and SADC Chairperson and was hosted by Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe at a State banquet. Zuma reiterated that there are clear signs that Zimbabwe is on the road to recovery and urged that the Global Political Agreement be fully implemented without delay. Zuma met with all the signatories to the agreement, and stated that effective recovery is also dependent on the removal of sanctions and other measures to hold back economic development. (The Presidency, August

## 11-Nation Military Exercise Under Way in Northern Cape

15. (U) The Citizen reports that the single largest multinational peace-enforcement exercise to be staged in South Africa since the advent of democracy is currently under way at the SA Army Combat Training Centre in Northern Cape. More than 8,000 soldiers from 11 SADC countries, most of them from the SANDF, are taking part in Exercise Golfinho. Participating countries include Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Military observers locally, including a number at diplomatic level, view the exercise as a litmus test for the SANDF in its efforts to improve regional co-operation in peacekeeping and peace support. (Privately-owned weekday newspaper)

SA Government Will Not Oppose Lawsuits Against US Companies  
QSA Government Will Not Oppose Lawsuits Against US Companies

16. (U) Justice Minister Jeff Radebe has written to the presiding judge of the US District Court of the southern district of New York reversing the government decision under former president Thabo Mbeki not to support lawsuits that were launched in New York by the victims of apartheid and their organization, Khulumani Support Group. Eight international companies face litigation following a South African government decision not to continue opposing the lawsuits against them. The conglomerates being sued in the class action are Barclays, Daimler, Ford, Fujitsu, General Motors, IBM, Rheinmetall and UBS. The claim is based on the United States' Alien Tort Statute, which allows people anywhere in the world to make claims against US-based corporations that have caused damage to them. The lawsuits relate to aiding and abetting serious crimes such as torture and extrajudicial killings by the apartheid regime in violation of international law. The government welcomed this development, Radebe stated, and would be willing to offer its

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counsel to the parties in pursuit of a settlement if requested to do so. The April judgment substantially narrowed the claims, previously against 23 corporations. As a class action, it provides for the inclusion of all affected individuals. (Johannesburg Business Report Online, September 3, 2009)

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Domestic News  
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## Human Settlement Minister to Improve Housing

17. (U) Human Settlement Minister Tokyo Sexwale spent a night in the Diepsloot informal settlement north of Johannesburg last month. He then visited the N2 Gateway housing project in Cape Town, which is currently facing massive housing backlogs. The visits are part of a fact-finding mission to understanding the living conditions in informal settlements. Late last week, Sexwale met with banks and businesses, urging them to lend a hand in solving the country's housing problem. Sexwale said his immediate mission was to find building contractors and companies to build new government houses. The Human Settlement Department has set the target of building 226,000 houses a year as more than 635 million people still need houses. In June, Sexwale told Parliament that expenditure on housing service delivery had increased to roughly \$1 billion USD. Sexwale since coming to office this year has approved over 570 housing projects and received billions in housing grants from the private sector. (Sowetan, August 31, 2009)

## African National Congress Gains Edge in By-Elections

18. (U) Municipalities in Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Northern Cape held by-elections this week. In Limpopo, the African National Congress (ANC) and the Democratic Alliance (DA) retained their wards in two municipalities as both parties won with overwhelming majorities. The ANC gained two wards in Thulamela municipality. The DA won most of the wards in Tzaneen followed by the ANC. The Limpopo Electoral Officer, Nkaro Mateta, told the SABC the by-elections went smoothly. In the Eastern Cape, the ANC won all

their wards except one as the DA retained its ward in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro by 65 percent. In the Northern Cape, the DA retained Ward One with a majority of 57 percent of the votes. The Independent Democrats (ID) came in second with 19 percent, followed by the ANC with 15 percent, the Freedom Front Plus with 6 percent and the Congress of the People (COPE) with 4 percent. Other parties that contested the election were COPE, African Christian Democratic Party, Pan-African Congress, and the ID. COPE made a key gain in Gauteng, winning a ward in the Ekurhuleni region. (SABCNEWS, September 2, 2009)

Judicial Service Commission decided not to investigate Judge Hlophe ¶9. (U) The Judicial Service Commission (JSC) has decided not to continue investigating allegations that Judge John Hlophe inappropriately tried to influence judges of the Constitutional Court. The decision was announced last week, two weeks after the decision was made behind closed doors. In July, Zuma increased members of the JSC by adding two Members of Parliament from the ruling party. There is some speculation the presidential appointments to the commission may have influenced the debate in favor of a decision not to continue with investigations.

(NEWS24.COM, August 31, 2009)

Presidential Hotline to be ready in September

¶10. (U) The Presidency will launch the President's service delivery hotline at the end of September 2009. Presidency official Vusi Mona Qhotline at the end of September 2009. Presidency official Vusi Mona told government employees on Monday in Centurion that the infrastructure was in place, cables were still being laid and furniture brought in. Moni reported that more than 70 officials are being trained as call center operators, and specialized units are being created in various government departments to help them with problems raised by callers. The presidential hotline will cost roughly \$800,000 USD to set up and roughly \$700,000 USD for staff salaries a year. Zuma promised the hotline in his State of the Nation address. According to the Presidency, when Zuma moved into his office he received over 500 calls, e-mails, letters and visits from the public each week on service delivery, but the number has increased to 1,300 a week. (The Star, September 1, 2009)

Bus Rapid Transit Attacked

¶11. (U) Two people this week were injured when a minibus taxi opened fire on a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) bus in Soweto. The BRT is a government initiative to improve public transport in country. However, taxi operators are opposing the project in fear that it would destroy their livelihoods. Last week, the South African National Taxi Council applied for an urgent interdict in the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria to stop government from implementing the bus system. The interdict was rejected and the BRT was launched on August 30. Many political analysts say the attack this week is similar to the turf wars fought in the 1980s between taxi associations and individual minibus taxi drivers. The city of Johannesburg has condemned the violent incident and has called on all law enforcement to step up measures of protecting passengers, BRT staff and property. (News24.com, September, 02, 2009)

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RSA: Soldiers Threaten 'More Mass Action' if Concerns Are Not Addressed

¶12. (U) Pretoria News reports that members of the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) members are threatening more mass action throughout the country, which may result in violence, if Defense Minister Lindiwe Sisulu does not address their grievances soon. In a two-day meeting at which the union discussed the clash between police and soldiers at the Union Buildings last Wednesday, South African Security Forces Union (SASFU) president Bhekinkosi Mvovo made it clear that union members did not wish to resort to violence and wanted to resolve their problems within the confines of the law. However, he warned that if issues like racism and transformation in the SANDF were not resolved soon there could be dire consequences. SASFU indicated that they are going to fight and defend their members, "no matter at what cost". Meanwhile, Mvovo rejected statements made by the acting chief of the SANDF, Lieutenant-General Themba Matanzima, speaking of a plot by disgruntled soldiers to abduct top military officials, including the minister. (Local daily, privately owned by Independent Newspaper Company)

Intelligence Agency Refuses Comment on Rumors of Zuma Ally

## Appointment

¶13. (U) News24 reports that the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) refused to reveal on Sunday whether Durban businessman and "Key Zuma Ally" Mo Shaik would be appointed as the agency's new director general. Although Mo Shaik denied the allegation, NIA spokesperson Lorna Daniels said the announcement would be made by the presidency once all the necessary procedures had been followed. DA's spokesperson for state security Theo Coetzee said the party would oppose this nomination. (Privately-owned 24-hour Internet news service with emphasis on news from South Africa and Africa; URL: <http://www.news24.co.za>)

## New Top Cop Discusses Observations Following Tour of Police Stations

¶14. (U) SAFM "After 8 Debate" program: Announcer Tim Modise interviewed National Police Commissioner Bheki Cele on his observations following his tour of police stations throughout the nine provinces. Cele said that he met with the provincial management and the station commissioners of all 1,116 stations in South Africa, and remarked that there are "pockets of excellence" in policing in the country as well as "areas that need to be fixed". According to Cele, policing resources need to be proportionally distributed and concentrated in areas that require more attention. Discussing future strategies for reducing crime, Cele said that the police's top management and provincial leadership will be going to a retreat to map out the new strategic direction of the force. One of the key areas that will be focused on is "priority crimes", which includes car hijackings, murders, rape and abuse, among others. (National SABC radio service, nominally independent but partially funded by government)

## Gips